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Docket Clerk  
DOT Central Docket Management Facility  
400 Seventh Street, S.W., Plaza-401  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Sir or Madam:

Ref.: FRA-1999-6439-3480

I urge FRA not to implement louder train horns in Beverly, Massachusetts. We heard them last week during a trial period. They were extremely disruptive because of their loudness and frequency. We foresee that these horns will become a public health problem in our community.

- 1) The Gloucester (MA) Branch line from Beverly northward is commuter rail, not freight rail.
- 2) I can hear the present horns starting at 5:30 a.m. from my home one mile away.
- 3) The new horn sound, which I repeatedly heard on 4/14/04 is considerably louder than the present horn sound and seemed closer to the house.
- 4) On occasion I have waited for a train to pass at Paradise Crossing, where the horn is sounded because of an accident that occurred farther down the tracks, not at the crossing several years ago. During the winter with the car windows closed, the engine running, the radio playing, the heaters working full blast, I could not hear the train horn. Other winter drivers experience what I experience, I am certain. And I am sure I and other drivers will not hear the new loud horn because of interior car noise.
- 5) During the summer at the same crossing I can hear the present horn because the car windows are open, although the engine is running and the radio is playing. Other drivers, however, may not hear the horns because their windows are closed and air conditioners are working. And they may be talking on their cell phones!
- 6) Loud horns many times per day especially in the early and late hours (5:30 a.m., 11:20 or 12:50 p.m.) are a public health issue.
- 7) SOLUTION: Bright strobe lights triggered by the approaching train with the warning: "FLASHING LIGHTS TRAIN NEAR. STOP!"
- 8) Recently at the Hamilton (MA) railroad station I saw strobe lights flashing to warn people to get off the tracks as a train was approaching. They were fixed on 12-15 ft. steel poles, which must be wired into the tracks. They were very effective because they were so visible. If the gate lights are wired into the tracks, strobe lights can also be so wired. They would not be very expensive to install or maintain.

I URGE FRA TO SUBSTITUTE BRIGHT STROBE LIGHTS IN PLACE OF LOUD TRAIN HORNS.

I repeat: THIS IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE!